Capitola City Council

Agenda Report

Meeting: August 27, 2026

From: Public Works Department

Subject: Stockton Avenue Bridge Existing Conditions Assessment and Project Development Services Agreement

Recommended Action: Authorize the City Manager to execute a Professional Services Agreement with CSW/ST2 for the assessment of Stockton Avenue Bridge's existing conditions and project development services in an amount not to exceed $474,912.

Summary: On April 9, 2026, the City Council directed staff to evaluate multiple options for phasing the future of the Stockton Avenue Bridge, including replacement, rehabilitation, retrofit, and deck replacement alternatives, and return with sufficient information for the Council to determine the appropriate next steps.

The proposed agreement is Phase 1 of that work. It provides the engineering investigations, surveys, and technical analyses needed to establish the bridge's existing conditions, deficiencies, and key project constraints and provides the technical foundation for developing and comparing alternatives.

The funding currently available is sufficient to complete Phase 1, but not the alternatives analysis requested by the Council. At the conclusion of Phase 1, the technical findings will be presented to the Council. Phase 2 would develop and compare the requested alternatives, including planning-level costs, construction considerations, service life, and permitting constraints, and would require separate Council authorization and additional funding.

Approval of this agreement does not commit the City to a particular alternative or future project.

Background: The Stockton Avenue Bridge is one of the City's most important transportation assets, providing the primary connection between Capitola Village and surrounding residential neighborhoods while serving vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, emergency responders, and utility infrastructure.

In FY 2015-16, the City allocated $20,000 from the General Fund to evaluate options for reducing flood risk at Stockton Avenue Bridge. Following completion of a report identifying potential flood-reduction measures, the City allocated an additional $350,000 in FY 2022-23 to evaluate the feasibility of implementing those measures. Before that work began, the City secured $500,000 in grant funding from the California Department of Water Resources, with support from Senator Laird, to evaluate long-term bridge improvements following the January 2023 storms. Since then, the City has completed several technical investigations, including a debris mitigation feasibility study, structural condition evaluation, hydraulic and scour analyses, utility investigations, and preliminary traffic evaluations.

Collectively, these investigations identified several issues requiring further evaluation, including deterioration of portions of the bridge deck, reinforcing steel corrosion, hydraulic and scour concerns, utility conflicts, and questions regarding long-term seismic performance and remaining service life. While these investigations concluded the bridge does not present an immediate collapse risk, they also concluded that additional engineering investigations would be necessary before long-term alternatives could be fully evaluated. The completed engineering investigations are summarized in Attachment 3, with the full Existing Conditions Assessment Memorandum provided as Attachment 4.

On April 9, 2026, the City Council received the structural evaluation findings and directed staff to return with a proposed contract to further evaluate future options for the Stockton Avenue Bridge. Specifically, the City Council directed staff to evaluate multiple bridge replacement options; rehabilitation, retrofit, and deck replacement alternatives; historic preservation considerations; traffic impacts; implementation strategies; funding opportunities; and the potential use of the Capitola Trestle as a temporary pedestrian and bicycle route during bridge construction. The City Council also directed staff to provide a long-term project development strategy and verify consistency with the existing grant requirements.

The proposed scope of the agreement (Attachment 2) completes the planning-level investigations needed before bridge alternatives can be developed or assessed. In other words, the proposed scope excludes any tasks related to preparing plans, comparing alternatives, estimating alternative-specific costs, or recommending a preferred alternative to the City Council. Any future alternatives analysis, environmental review, or design work would require separate City Council authorization and additional funding.

Discussion: On April 9, 2026, the City Council directed staff to evaluate multiple bridge replacement, rehabilitation, retrofit, and deck replacement alternatives and return with sufficient information for the City Council to determine the appropriate next steps for the project.

The proposed scope (Attachment 2) follows the project-development process typically used for locally-owned bridges to preserve eligibility for potential state and federal funding, which is often necessary given the cost of major bridge rehabilitation or replacement projects.

Attachment 5 illustrates the anticipated project development process and how the proposed agreement fits within the broader evaluation of future bridge improvements. This process begins with engineering investigations to develop a comprehensive understanding of the bridge's existing condition, opportunities, and constraints before long-term alternatives are developed and compared.

This phased approach allows each stage of project development to build upon the findings of the previous phase, ensuring that future alternatives are developed using a comprehensive understanding of the bridge's existing condition and constraints. It also allows the City Council to determine whether additional work is warranted before authorizing subsequent phases of project development.

The Stockton Avenue Bridge is a locally-owned bridge, and as such, the City is responsible for developing the engineering, environmental, and planning information necessary to evaluate future improvements. While Caltrans administers state and federal bridge funding programs for local agencies, development of project-specific engineering investigations and technical studies for locally owned bridges is the responsibility of the local agency.

Routine bridge inspections prepared under the National Bridge Inspection Standards provide an important assessment of a bridge's current condition and help identify maintenance and repair needs necessary to keep the bridge safely in service. They are an essential component of bridge management and represent one component of a comprehensive understanding of a bridge's overall condition and long-term needs. These inspections are designed to support bridge management and maintenance decisions but are not intended to answer broader project development questions regarding long-term rehabilitation, retrofit, or replacement strategies. Accordingly, a bridge may be determined to be safe for continued service while still exhibiting structural deterioration, seismic vulnerabilities, hydraulic deficiencies, utility conflicts, or other conditions that influence future rehabilitation or replacement decisions. Those broader considerations require engineering investigations and analyses beyond the scope of routine bridge inspections. In the case of the Stockton Avenue Bridge, previous City investigations have already identified several such issues, including deterioration of portions of the bridge deck, reinforcing steel corrosion, hydraulic and scour concerns, utility conflicts, and questions regarding long-term seismic performance and remaining service life.

Building upon the engineering investigations completed to date, the proposed scope expands the evaluation through additional structural, planning-level seismic, hydraulic, traffic, utility, environmental, and historic analyses needed to support future project development. Collectively, the completed and proposed investigations will establish the engineering basis necessary to understand the bridge's deficiencies, opportunities, and constraints and provide the information needed to evaluate future bridge alternatives. A summary of the completed investigations is provided in Attachment 3, with the full Existing Conditions Assessment Memorandum included as Attachment 4.

One of the technical investigations included in the proposed scope is a historic resource evaluation. This work is required as part of the project development process and will document the bridge's historic significance and identify the regulatory requirements that would apply to future potential projects.

Completion of the historic evaluation does not determine whether the bridge will ultimately be rehabilitated, retrofitted, or replaced, nor does it predetermine the outcome of the alternatives evaluation. Rather, it ensures that historic considerations are identified early and incorporated into the evaluation of future alternatives. Should a future project affect a historic resource, additional coordination and environmental review would be required in accordance with applicable City, state and federal regulations.

Collectively, the completed and proposed investigations will establish the engineering basis necessary to understand the bridge's deficiencies, opportunities, and constraints and provide the information needed to evaluate future bridge alternatives.

The proposed $474,912 agreement authorizes Phase 1 only. This work will document the bridge's existing condition, identify the major issues and constraints, and establish the technical basis for developing bridge alternatives in a future phase. It will not develop or compare alternatives, estimate alternative-specific costs, select a preferred alternative, or prepare design plans.

Table 1. Phase 1 Scope and Budget

Phase 1 Task	**Amount**	**What It Provides**
Task 1 – Project Definition and Funding Strategy	$35,680	Defines the project needs and requirements and confirms the funding pathway with Caltrans.
Task 2 – Existing Conditions	$184,905	Survey, geotechnical testing, traffic data, utility review, and bridge-condition documentation.
Task 3 – Technical Evaluation and Outreach	$206,827	Structural, seismic, hydraulic, traffic, environmental, and historic analysis, plus stakeholder outreach and a Council presentation.
Direct Expenses	$47,500	Field testing, traffic control, permits, research, and other project costs.
Total Phase 1	**$474,912**	Provides the basis for developing alternatives in a future phase.

Table 2 summarizes how the proposed agreement advances each element of the Council's April 9, 2026, direction. Phase 2 is not included in the proposed agreement and would require separate City Council authorization and additional funding.

Table 2. Relationship Between April 9, 2026 Council Direction and the Proposed Scope

April 9, 2026, Council Direction	**How It Is Addressed**
1. The contract shall provide the City Council with preliminary plans and analysis for multiple bridge replacement options.	Phase 1 establishes the technical basis for this work. Preliminary comparisons of rehabilitation, retrofit, deck-replacement, and replacement alternatives, costs, and comparisons would be completed in Phase 2 – Alternatives Analysis (Task 4), subject to future Council authorization.
2. The contract shall also include evaluation of bridge retrofit and/or bridge deck replacement alternatives.	Phase 1 evaluates the bridge's condition, remaining service life, seismic risk, hydraulics, utilities, traffic, and other constraints. Specific alternatives would be developed and compared in Phase 2.
3. The contract shall allow the City Council to review the alternatives and either select a preferred option.	Alternatives would be presented to the Council following Phase 2 for selection of a preferred option or a decision not to proceed.

4. The contract shall provide the City Council with a realistic plan for evaluating the Capitola Trestle.	Phase 1 evaluates closure impacts, detour needs, and emergency access. The Trestle is being evaluated in a separate assessment pursuant to the MOU with the Regional Transportation Commission.
5. The contract shall verify this approach will satisfy the requirements of the grant received for bridge work.	Proposed scope is consistent with the objectives of the existing grant and supports future funding eligibility.
6. The contract shall provide City Council and the public with a long-term plan for project development and implementation.	Phase 1 identifies the required project-development steps and decision points. A detailed project-development roadmap would be prepared in Phase 2.
7. The contract shall include a traffic flow chart.	Phase 1 includes existing traffic, detour, and emergency-access analysis. Alternative-specific traffic-flow analysis would be completed in Phase 2.

Next Steps: Upon completion of Phase 1, the technical findings will be presented to the City Council. The City Council may then authorize Phase 2, which would develop and compare rehabilitation, retrofit, deck-replacement, and replacement alternatives, including planning-level costs, service life, construction considerations, and permitting constraints.

Phase 2 and all subsequent environmental review, design, right-of-way, and construction work would require separate City Council authorization and additional funding. Approval of the proposed agreement does not commit the City to a particular alternative or future project.

Public Outreach: The proposed scope includes stakeholder outreach and public engagement throughout the existing conditions assessment. Outreach during this phase will help identify community priorities, local concerns, and operational considerations that may influence future project development. Community input will be documented and considered as future bridge alternatives are developed and evaluated.

Fiscal Impact: The Stockton Avenue Bridge project is supported by approximately $500,000 in California Department of Water Resources grant funding and $350,000 in previously appropriated City funding, for a total project budget of approximately $850,000.

To date, approximately $200,000 has been expended for bridge access and investigative construction activities, and approximately $151,000 has been expended for professional engineering services, including the debris mitigation feasibility study, structural evaluation, hydraulic and scour analyses, utility investigations, and related technical studies. Approximately $499,000 remains available for completion of the existing conditions assessment and project development services described in this report.

The proposed agreement utilizes the remaining available project funding for the activities described in the proposed scope. The proposed agreement is anticipated to utilize substantially all of the remaining project budget authorized for this phase of work. No additional appropriation is requested as part of this action.

The proposed scope of work integrates the City Council’s phasing strategy into the Caltrans bridge funding process to help ensure that a potential future project is eligible for state funding should the City Council decide pursue such a project.

Attachments:

1. Professional Services Agreement
2. Scope of Work
3. Executive Summary – Stockton Avenue Bridge Existing Conditions Assessment
4. Existing Conditions Assessment Memorandum
5. Project Development Process Overview
6. Public Comment Received Before Agenda Published

Alignment with 2025-2029 Strategic Plan Priority: Community Safety; Sustainable Infrastructure

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